

City Council of the City of New Castle
Regular City Council Meeting
Town Hall, 201 Delaware Street, New Castle
Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Call to order: 7 p.m.

Roll Call:

Councilperson Megginson
Councilperson Cochran
Council President Ratchford
Councilperson Petty (absent)
Councilperson Vannucci

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator
Donald Reese, Mayor
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official & Fire Marshall
Daniel Tjaden, Police Chief

Approval of Minutes by Date: 1/13/2015 Public Hearing; 1/13/2015 Regular Monthly Meeting; 1/15/2015 Special Meeting; 1/27/2015 Special Meeting

Councilperson Cochran motioned and Councilperson Megginson seconded approval of the minutes without changes. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Carlin reported on the balances of the city's accounts as of January 31, 2014. The total cash on hand in all accounts is \$2,994,444.13.

The council unanimously accepted the report.

Business from the City Administrator

Mr. Barthel reported on three engineering projects that City is managing but not funding.

1. URS assisted the City in creating an RFP for the RiverWalk project. The funds secured for the repair of damage from the hurricane will be awarded to the municipality, but the project will be managed by the Trustees.
2. The City has received a Grant from Senator Poore for \$20,000 for pedestrian walkway and drainage improvements. The Trustees will match the funding to make \$40,000 available for the project. The Conservation District will manage the funds and the project.
3. Forsythe Associates is preparing a grant for the design of the bulkhead at end of Delaware Street.

An RFP will be issued for bids for the City's insurance coverage in time for the budget process this Spring.

Mr. Barthel reminded everyone that the City Election is in April and the last day to register as a candidate is February 27.

Approval of Staff Reports

Chief Tjaden reported:

- Recently, there have been several car thefts in the City. A suspect has been captured and is being held in Philadelphia.
- The robbery at Taco Bell has been solved and it has been determined that the victim set up the crime.
- The New Castle Police Department has been working in cooperation with the New Castle County Police on a drug investigation with good results.
- The Chief met with the City Administrator to review the effective use of the new TAPS program.

President Ratchford asked if the Chief would like to address the year-over-year increase in traffic violations. The Chief stated that the police are now motivated and engaged in addressing traffic issues.

Councilperson Megginson motioned to accept the staff reports as submitted and Councilperson Vannucci seconded. The council unanimously accepted the reports.

Grant Review

Councilperson Cochran reported on grant receipts for the month of January.

Council Communications

Councilperson Megginson has been in contact with DelDOT regarding the construction signs that remain in the area of Washington and South Streets. Some repair work is needed for low spots, drains that are too high and the incorrect type of grass, so the signs will remain for use during the repairs. DelDOT is experiencing difficulty making contact with the contractor to return to make corrections and repairs.

Councilperson Megginson contacted Senator Poore regarding the recurring pot holes at 6th and Harmony. The Senator contacted the Secretary of Transportation resulting in a plan to cut out the problem section to make a more permanent repair instead of filling the holes.

Councilperson Cochran met with the MSC regarding the requirements for the proposed Verizon antennae on the City water tower. City Administrator Barthel continues to negotiate with Verizon.

Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only)

None

Business from the Mayor

Mayor Reese reported that the Separation Day meetings are now occurring every week to plan the 2015 event. The contract for fireworks has been signed and the bands are booked. The Mayor encourages everyone to get involved in the committee.

Business from the Council President

President Ratchford encouraged citizens with questions about flood insurance to contact Jeff Bergstrom, the City Building Official. The City is working hard to alleviate drainage issues and to be prepared for storms.

The Trustees will give land to the City for use as a park on 14th street in Washington Park.

Mayor & Council Proclamation for Good Will Fire Company Deputy Chief B. Joseph Mullen.

President Ratchford read a proclamation from the Mayor and City Council to recognize Deputy Chief Mullen's service to the Good Will Fire Company.

Old Business

Approval of Ordinance 500; an Ordinance to revise and restate Chapter 74: The Tree Commission and Chapter 210: Street Trees, of the City Code

Councilperson Ratchford reviewed the previous reading, the public hearing and posting of the Ordinance on the City website and stated that the Ordinance does not need to be read again.

The Motion to approve Ordinance 500 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Megginson.

Ordinance 500 passed unanimously.

New Business

Presentation by City Engineer of URS Corporation regarding options concerning the scope of City Street Projects with discussion and decision by Council.

Councilperson Megginson introduced the City Engineer, David Athey. Mr. Athey presented the City's paving needs. The costs provided are estimates and can change. One major variable that impacts the cost is the price of oil.

There is one major project for 14th Street which is a rebuild and is roughly half of the total cost of the City's paving needs. 14th Street doesn't drain properly and has little to no curbing. There are many cracks and areas that are deteriorated. Linden Avenue is only 20 feet wide and needs to be widened. Estimate for this project is \$380,000 to \$440,000.

Delaware Street from 3rd Street to the River is not in terrible shape but there are isolated pavement failures, deteriorated curbing, crosswalk and ramps misalignment, and missing handicap ramps. Council needs to decide what material to use for curbing. There are

advantages to using granite but it more expensive than concrete. Consideration needs to be given to replacing the aging terra cotta storm drain under Delaware Street before repaving. This project will provide opportunity to increase the visibility of crosswalks though the use of alternative materials. Cost estimate is \$130,000 to \$155,000 between 2nd and 3rd and \$100,000 to \$125,000 between 2nd and the River.

Porter's Alley is currently a dirt and gravel pathway, so a new road would need to be built. Large trees limit the width to 16 feet. Unless the trees are removed, the road would need to be one way. Approximate cost is \$24,000 to \$34,000.

Platt Alley is deteriorated in several locations. The areas needing repair will be boxed-out and then the entire alley will be resurfaced. Estimated repair cost is \$44,000 to \$54,000.

Mt. Vesuvius Alley has ruts and drainage issues. Sections will be boxed-out and then the alley will be resurfaced. A concrete gutter and sidewalk extension will be added. The estimate is \$40,000 to \$48,000.

President Ratchford asked about prioritizing the projects and the impact any delay would have on the work that needs to be done. Mr. Athey responded that in some cases delaying would allow further deterioration resulting in the need for additional work. He cannot prioritize the projects.

Councilperson Megginson asked for the City Engineer's opinion on completing the work on Delaware Street in phases and waiting a year to do the topping. Mr. Athey recommended to at least fix the drainage since it's a signature street. Councilperson Megginson suggested getting the curb in first and then resurface next year. Mr. Athey agreed that is a good game plan because it allows evaluation of the utilities such as storm drain issues. The City Engineer believes incremental repair of the curbs isn't a good solution. Doing all the curbs first gives the opportunity to address functional needs along with the aesthetics.

The City Engineer's recommendation for the bid structure is ask for a base bid with add-ons for incremental additional charges.

Councilperson Megginson commented that 14th Street has earmarked State funding.

President Ratchford recommended doing the work in stages and doing it correctly.

Mayor Reese asked how much the City would save if the Department of Public Works installed the granite curbs like they did on West 3rd.

Councilperson Cochran believes there may be some surplus granite in storage.

Councilperson Vannucci stated that the Governor wants to cut the Legislator's Street Funds. There are funds for this year but it is unknown what will happen next year.

Mr. Bergstrom asked if Porter Alley would need to be 24 feet wide to make the turn at Penn Street. The City Engineer agreed that further evaluation needs to go into planning.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2015-03 for the placement request of Bailey's Dawgs as a vendor operating within the City limits.

Harvey Whiteman and his wife would like same location as last year. They will use the same equipment with the addition of an 8X8 canopy for sun protection.

Councilperson Cochran asked if they are aware that may have to move due to pier construction. They acknowledged the possibility.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2015-03 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2015-03 passed unanimously.

City Attorney Daniel Losco asked that a new health permit be present to the City in July.

First reading of Ordinance 501, An Ordinance to amend Chapter 140 of the Code of the City of New Castle to add a new Article VI establishing regulations, violations and penalties relating to disorderly premises and the operation of burglary alarms.

The Police Chief presented the Ordinance as a quality of life issue. It allows the City to hold landlords responsible for the actions of tenants that cause a police response. The Ordinance also addresses the problem of false alarms. Ninety-nine percent of alarms are false and the Ordinance will hold the resident accountable for repeated false alarms that cause police or fire department response.

President Ratchford said consideration was given to allow code enforcement as a result of City police, fire or MSC entry and finding unacceptable conditions. City Solicitor Losco believes that the City already has that ability.

The Ordinance was read in its entirety by President Ratchford, City Administrator William Barthel and City Solicitor Daniel Losco.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2015-06 City of New Castle Arbor Day Proclamation

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2015-06 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2015-06 passed unanimously.

There will be an Arbor Day Celebration on the 24th of April at Penn Farm.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2015-07 A Resolution to Appoint an Absentee Ballot Clerk to perform duties related to the 2015 City Election, as detailed in the New Castle City Code.

The Motion to consider Resolution No. 2015-07 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Cochran.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2015-07 passed unanimously.

Comments from the Floor

Candace Checchi, 2015 New Castle Jaycees President introduced herself and looks forward to working with the City and the Council.

A representative of the Goodwill Fire Company thanked the City for their ongoing support of the Fire Company and Volunteers.

The motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Cochran, seconded by Councilperson Vannucci and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Wurtzel
Clerk of the City of New Castle